

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 DHA-02 IO-13 OMB-01 MCT-01 /073 W  
-----108831 281025Z /17

R 280835Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5210  
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 3380  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3485

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SHUM, BG  
SUBJ: DISTRUBANCE IN DACCA CENTRAL JAIL

1. THE BDG, AFTER A SIX-DAY SILENCE, HAS APPOINTED A ONE-MAN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE A DISTURBANCE WHICH OCCURRED IN THE DACCA CENTRAL JAIL JUNE 22. JUSTICE A.F.M. AHSANUDDIN CHOWDHURY, A JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH, WAS APPOINTED TO CONDUCT THE INQUIRY AFTER A HOST OF POLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE AWAMI LEAGUE, DEMANDED AN EXPLANATION OF WHY MORE THAN TWENTY POLITICAL PRISONERS, AMONG OTHERS, WERE SEVERELY BEATEN IN THE JAIL.

2. PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENED REMAINS UNCLEAR. IN THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS, IT WAS REPORTED OFFICIALLY BY THE HOME MINISTRY THAT TWO GROUPS OF PRISONERS, FOR UNKNOWN REASONS, FOUGHT WITH EACH OTHER. IN AN ATTEMPT TO QUELL THE DISTURBANCE, PRISON GUARDS REPORTEDLY INJURED MANY PRISONERS (250 ACCORDING TO ONE BENGALI LANGUAGE PRESS REPORT).

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WE HAVE LEARNED THAT AMONG THOSE PRISONERS BEATEN WERE FORMER AWAMI LEAGUE STATE MINISTER ABDUL MOMIN TALUKDAR, LESSER AWAMI LEAGUE FUNCTIONARIES, SEVERAL JSD MEMBERS AND A FEW POLITICIANS REPORTEDLY FROM THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY/MUZAFFAR AND THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY/BHASHANI. AFTER THE INCIDENT, THE HOME MINISTRY MADE AN INQUIRY AND ARRESTED A NUMBER OF PRISON GUARDS.

3. HOWEVER, THE BENGALI-LANGUAGE PRESS, WHICH REPORTED THE TROUBLE SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THE ENGLISH PRESS, SUGGESTED THAT THE PRISONERS HAD SIMPLY BEEN BEATEN BY THE GUARDS. THE HOME MINISTRY'S ACCOUNT OF A CLASH BETWEEN TWO GROUPS OF PRISONERS DOES NOT AGREE WITH OTHER REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED WHICH DO NOT MENTION A CLASH.

4. COMMENT: THE LONG OFFICIAL SILENCE IN THE FACE OF BENGALI PRESS REPORTS AND THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THESE REPORTS AND THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT SUGGEST THAT THE BDG MAY ATTEMPT TO WHITEWASH THE AFFAIR BY HAVING THE INQUIRY FIND THAT THE GUARDS WERE ONLY DOING THEIR DUTY IN INTERVENING IN A FRACAS.

5. THIS IS THE FIRST REPORT UNDER THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION OF SERIOUS TROUBLE INVOLVING JAILED POLITICAL PRISONERS. IF THE BDG ATTEMPTS A COVER-UP, IT MAY PROVIDE AN ISSUE FOR THE AWAMI LEAGUE AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES, WHICH HAVE BEEN DRIFTING FOR MONTHS WITHOUT ISSUES AS PRESIDENT ZIA HAS DOMINATED THE HEADLINES. MASTERS

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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